

Foods from the Freezer

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NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

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Prepared by
Ruth M. Dawson
Extension Nutritionist

NDAC *Extension Service*
FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA



FOODS FROM THE FREEZER

Frozen products from the home freezer will provide your family with foods that are like freshly gathered or prepared ones, in color, flavor and nutritive value.

To maintain top quality in frozen foods certain facts about the foods you freeze should be checked.

1. Choose only strictly fresh foods of high quality. Do not freeze foods that have become wilted, bruised or old. Some varieties of fruits and vegetables freeze better than others. Not all foods when frozen are desirable for eating.
2. How the food is handled will affect its food value. Freeze as quickly as possible after gathering or preparing the food. Cool all foods thoroughly before freezing. Do not allow them to stand around at room temperatures too long as this causes nutritional changes and loss of color. Scald vegetables and chill before packaging - saves vitamin C.
3. Good wrapping or packaging is a must. Foods unwrapped or with poor loose wrapping get dry, lose weight and become stale during the storage period. Use a tight moisture-vapor-proof wrapping so that no moisture can escape from the food or air can enter the food.

Be sure the packaging is such that it will not break, tear or puncture during handling. The material used should be odor-free and convenient to handle. Foods in metal containers freeze faster than those in paper containers because metal is a better heat conductor than paper.

4. Proper freezing and storing are very important: During freezing there is a progressive separation of water in the form of ice crystals. Rapid freezing causes very small ice crystals to form; therefore freeze foods as quickly as possible (for the home freezer at a -10°F. or -20°F.) The storage temperature must also be kept at 0°F. or lower to maintain quality. To lengthen the storage life of fatty foods, like pork, fat fish and butter, store at -10°F. in place of 0°F. Keep the storage temperature as even as possible. If the temperature fluctuates, the food loses moisture.

Regulate the amount of food to be frozen so it will be completely frozen within 24 hours.

HOW LONG CAN FROZEN FOODS BE STORED

As long as the temperature of a home freezer is held at zero or below, properly packaged foods will keep in excellent condition for months. However, each food has a storage life when it is best after which the quality declines. The food is not poisonous, just not as palatable. "Many people believe that frozen foods will keep indefinitely if kept frozen hard, this is not true"--J.D. Winter

SAFE STORAGE PERIODS AT 0° F.

By: J.D. Winter - University of Minnesota

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	9 to 18 months
All vegetables	All fruits (except citrus)
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	About 9 months
Lamb	Beef (except ground beef)
Veal	Poultry (except broilers)
Game bird	Fresh creamery butter
Game animals	Cheddar cheese
Eggs (processed)	Cookies
	Fruit cake (baked)
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	About 6 months
Broilers	Poultry (when cut up)
Turkeys	Oysters and shrimp (unpeeled)
Ducks (domestic)	Baked bread and rolls
Most fish	Mushrooms
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	About 4 months
Ground beef	Beef liver, heart, tongue
Geese (domestic)	Thick cream (40% or more)
Most shellfish	Pork (except ground pork)
Some fatty fish	Baked cakes and cupcakes
Baked pies	Most cooked foods
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	2 to 3 months
Citrus fruits	Cooked shrimp (peeled)
Ham (not sliced)	Baked egg-yolk sponge cake
Bacon (not sliced)	Packaged cut poultry*
Ground pork	Baked cup cakes
Other pork*	Baked cakes
Unbaked pies	Cooked foods
Baked quick breads	
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*When bought at store at indefinite time after killing	
	Less than 1 month
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Ice cream	Unbaked rolls
Sandwiches	Unbaked yeast dough
Chiffon pies	Unbaked quick breads
Homogenized milk	Brown 'N Serve rolls
Frosted cakes	Cake batters
Leftover foods	

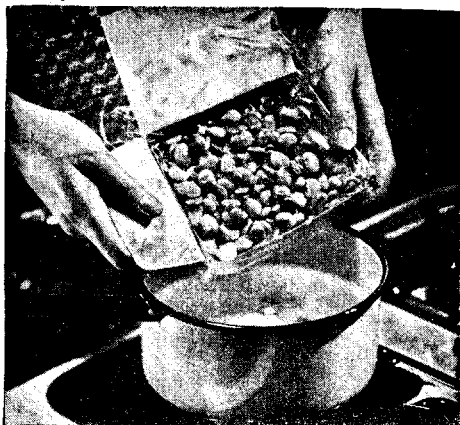
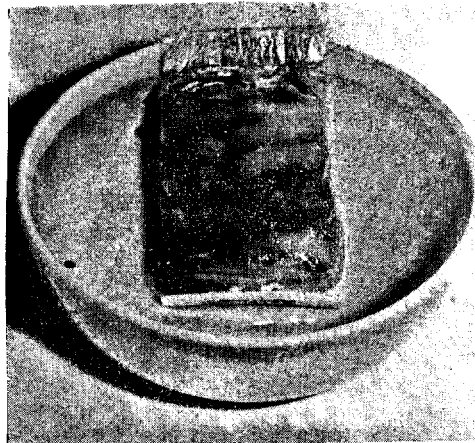
Note - Light smoking of unsalted fresh meat, poultry and fish greatly prolongs storage life..

THAWING FROZEN FOODS

To maintain quality and nutritive value it is best to thaw foods fairly rapidly and to leave them in their original, unopened containers during the thawing period. Remember, small packages thaw more quickly than large ones.

Fruits - Frozen fruits to be used uncooked should be partly thawed at room temperature and served while a little ice still remains. A pound package requires 3 to 4 hours to thaw.

If air-tight containers are used, thawing may be hastened by placing the container in cool water. It takes about 1 hr. for 1 lb. package.



From carton to the pan—and they cook in a jiffy.

Vegetables - No thawing is needed before cooking unless vegetables are frozen in a solid mass, then they are only slightly defrosted to separate the pieces. Example, asparagus and broccoli. Corn on the cob is partially defrosted before cooking.

Eggs, Cheese, Yeast - Completely defrost before using.

Poultry - For roasting, completely defrost. For frying, only partially defrost. For fricasseeing, cook while frozen.

Meat Large pieces may be cooked while frozen or may be thawed and cooked for it makes little difference to the taste or juiciness of the meat. Thin pieces of meat are usually cooked without thawing while pieces over 1 inch thick are best if partially defrosted for cooking. Pork which is high in fat is best if cooked without thawing. Thaw cooked meat completely and use at once. Thaw in the refrigerator at room temperature or in front of a fan. Do not defrost in water unless in a watertight package.

Roast Pork - Thawed and ready for
for the oven.



Fish - Treat fish same as meat. Fish is better if cooked while still cold and not left around after thawing, to prevent spoilage.

Baked Foods - Pies and bread are best if thawed at room temperatures. They take from 30 to 45 minutes to thaw. Rolls may be taken directly from the freezer and baked at 400° for 10 to 15 minutes.



If baked pies are to be served hot unwrap and place in oven 350° for 20 to 25 minutes to heat through. Thaw unfrosted baked cakes in their own package at room temperature for about 1 to 2 hours, depending upon size. Remove wrappings from frosted cakes before thawing to prevent frosting from becoming moist.

CASSEROLE DISHES Unbaked Pies, Soups, Creamed mixes, no defrosting is necessary before re-heating or baking.

CAN THAWED FOODS BE REFROZEN

Fruits - Frozen, thawed fruits show the effect of thawing and spoil more quickly than other foods. They ferment when spoiled but are not poisonous. There is no reason why thawed fruits in good condition, should not be refrozen. If the quality is affected by refreezing, use for jams, jellies or preserves.

Vegetables - Meats - Poultry - and Fish

These foods are non-acid and subject to putrefactive spoilage. Spoilage may usually be detected by the odor of the food although spoilage in vegetables and shellfish can take place without odor. Examine each package of thawed food carefully. If the package still contains some ice crystals, it may be refrozen without risk. If the package has completely thawed, the temperature is the best guide. If the temperature of the package is under 50° F. it can be refrozen. Bacteria develop rapidly over 50° F. It is unwise to refreeze either vegetables or shellfish which are completely defrosted

FOLLOW THESE RULES

1. Never eat any rethawed foods raw---cook before eating.
2. It is advisable to take any large amount of thawed foods that are to be refrozen to a locker plant for freezing as the home freezer is too slow and limited in the amounts that can be frozen at one time.
3. If in doubt about any thawed food it is best to discard the food.



Use plastic mittens or gloves while handling frozen foods.

References:

"Into the Freezer and Out"
- Tressler and Evans -

NORTH DAKOTA AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE AND THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING. E.J. HASLERUD, DIRECTOR OF EXTENSION SERVICE
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